

Message Text

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SUBJ: POLISH MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE RETURN OF THE CROWN OF ST.
STEPHEN

REF: BUDAPEST 139

1. POLISH TELEVISION DID NOT CARRY NEWS OF THE RETURN OF THE CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN TO HUNGARY, BUT THE EVENT RECEIVED FAIRLY PROMINENT ATTENTION IN THE POLISH PRESS. TRYBUNA LUDU AND ZYCIE WARSZAWY PUBLISHED DISPATCHES FROM THEIR CORRESPONDENTS IN HUNGARY. OTHER WARSAW DAILIES RELIED ON POLISH PRESS AGENCY (PAP) REPORTS. PAP REPORTED ON JANUARY 9 THAT "PRESIDENT CARTER DECIDED TO GIVE BACK THE CROWN TO THE HUNGARIAN NATION IN OCTOBER LAST YEAR. A U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE DECISION WAS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S STRIVING TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, IN TUNE WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE FINAL ACT OF THE CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION . . . IT IS EMPHASIZED IN BUDAPEST THAT THE RETURN OF THE CROWN REMOVES A SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST REPUBLIC AND THE UNITED STATES. THIS ACT WILL ALSO INFLUENCE IN A POSITIVE WAY THE PROCESS OF INTERNATIONAL DETENTE."

2. ZYCIE WARSZAWY ON JANUARY 7 AND SLOWO POWSZECHNE ON JANUARY
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13 RAN BACKGROUND PIECES ON THE CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN. ACCORDING TO WLADYSLAW SWIDRAK, CORRESPONDENT OF ZYCIE WARSZAWY IN BUDAPEST, "IN 1944 'NILASZOWCY' (MEMBERS OF THE HUNGARIAN ARROW CROSS, IDENTIFIED IN THE SLOWO POWSZECHNE ARTICLE AS 'HUNGARIAN FASCISTS) STOLE IT (THE CROWN) AND TOOK IT TO THE UNITED STATES. IN 1945 AMERICAN AUTHORITIES TOOK THE CROWN FROM THEM AND PUT THE HUNGARIAN TREASURE UNDER THEIR CARE. EFFORTS TO RETURN IT

TO HUNGARY TOOK A LONG TIME. HOWEVER, JUSTICE AND POLITICAL REASON PREVAILED."

3. ANTONI WOJTECKI'S ACCOUNT IN SLOWO POWSZECHNE OF THE CROWN'S POST-WORLD WAR II FATE IS MORE ELABORATE. ACCORDING TO WOJTECKI: THE "HUNGARIAN FASCISTS" LOADED A 44-CAR TRAIN WITH STATE TREASURES TO BE TRANSPORTED TO THE WEST. THE TRAIN WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS AT SALZBURG, AUSTRIA. ONE-HALF OF THE TRAIN REACHED THE SWISS BORDER, BUT WAS TURNED BACK. FRENCH SOLDIERS IN WESTERN AUSTRIA DISCOVERED THE TREASURES AND SENT THEM BACK TO HUNGARY. THE OTHER HALF OF THE TRAIN, INCLUDING THE CAR WITH THE CROWN, FELL INTO THE HANDS OF THE AMERICANS, AND THE CROWN WAS TAKEN TO THE U.S. WOJTECKI WRITES THAT CONGRESS TOOK UP THE MATTER DIRECTLY AFTER THE END OF THE WAR. "PRESIDENT TRUMAN RECOMMENDED TO THE OCCUPYING POWERS THAT ALL HUNGARIAN VALUABLES TAKEN FROM THE COUNTRY AFTER JANUARY 20, 1945, BE LOCATED AND RETURNED TO HUNGARY. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE, THE FATE OF ALL OTHER TREASURES STOLEN IN THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 15, 1944, TO JANUARY 20, 1945, WAS TO BE NEGOTIATED AT A LATER DATE." THE CROWN, WOJTECKI WRITES, FELL IN THE LATTER CATEGORY.

4. PRESS COMMENTARY ON THE RETURN OF THE CROWN WAS UNIFORMLY FAVORABLE. ZYCIE WARSZAWY ON SEPTEMBER 7 DESCRIBED THE RETURN AS "AN ACT OF GOOD WILL." ZBIGNIEW LAKOMSKI, CORRESPONDENT FOR TRYBUNA LUDU IN HUNGARY, SUPPLIED A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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CEREMONIES, INCLUDING EXCERPTS FROM THE SPEECHES OF SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE AND CHAIRMAN OF THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ANTAL APRO. THE RETURN OF THE CROWN, "THE TRUE SYMBOL OF A THOUSAND YEARS OF HUNGARIAN STATEHOOD," TO ITS RIGHTFUL OWNER, "THE HUNGARIAN NATION" (SLOWO POWSZECHNE), IS GENERALLY PRAISED AS AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN HUNGARY AND THE UNITED STATES. DAVIES

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